



STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF CHAIRMAN GEOFF DAVIS (R-KY)
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES
INTRODUCTION OF THE STANDARD DATA ACT
NOVEMBER 3, 2011

(REMARKS AS PREPARED)

Mr. Speaker, today I am joining with my colleague Mr. Doggett of Texas, among others, to introduce the *Standard Data and Technology Advancement Act*, or the “Standard DATA Act.” This legislation will establish consistent requirements for the electronic content and format of data used in the administration of key human services programs authorized by the Social Security Act.

Human services programs serve overlapping populations and should, from an information technology standpoint, operate consistently within and across programs. By beginning the process of data standardization and the use of common reporting mechanisms, this bill will help achieve three goals: better prevent and identify fraud and abuse; increase the efficiency of administrative resources to serve eligible beneficiaries; and produce program savings for U.S. taxpayers.

The private sector is far ahead of the public sector in its ability to use data efficiently to detect patterns of misuse, such as when credit cards are lost or stolen, and streamline backend data processing to reduce manual workloads. The public sector needs to review and implement these same sorts of best practices to better improve the operation of public benefit programs.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources, I called a March 11, 2011 hearing on the use of data matching to improve customer service, increase program integrity, and achieve taxpayer savings. We received testimony in support of consistent data standards that are non-proprietary and promote the interoperability of data across various information technology platforms, including the range of State legacy systems. The hearing confirmed that not only are programs within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction in silos, but so are the accompanying data.

Applying the provisions of the Standard DATA Act across multiple programs will advance the longer-term goal of allowing data both within and across all Federal assistance programs to operate more efficiently – first by establishing standard elements for individual items of information, and second by defining, in predictable ways, how those elements relate to one another. These standardization activities will promote transparency, flexibility, and consistency across various information technology platforms established by Federal and State agencies.

This bill continues the efforts begun in the bipartisan, bicameral *Child and Family Services Extension and Enhancement Act of 2011*, which was our first effort at requiring a human services program to implement standard data elements and reporting. President Obama signed that bill into law on September 30, 2011.

Improved data standards will help increase the efficiency of data exchanges to use and reuse data within and across programs. That will allow States to automate the exchange of claimant data on work and benefit receipt, reducing delays and minimizing improper payments. It will also help to automate application forms by pre-populating them with reliable and verified data, which can reduce the manual burden on staff and allow them more time to engage beneficiaries, all while reducing error. That's good for program beneficiaries and taxpayers at the same time.

I thank my colleagues for co-sponsoring this important legislation, starting with Mr. Doggett, the Ranking Member on the Human Resources Subcommittee, as well as Mr. Lewis of Georgia, Mr. Herger, Mr. Nunes, Mr. Tiberi, Mr. Reichert, Mr. Boustany, Mr. Price of Georgia, Ms. Jenkins, Mr. Paulsen, Mr. Marchant, Mr. Berg, Mrs. Black, and Mr. Reed.

I also want to thank Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Issa and the Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and Procurement Reform Subcommittee Chairman Lankford for co-sponsoring this bill, as well as for their support and leadership on the larger effort to improve data reporting transparency.

I invite all Members to join us in supporting this important legislation designed to improve the integrity of the benefit programs millions of Americans access today, and ensure that taxpayer funds are properly spent.

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